

Revolutionary Spam Firewall

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The email spam nightmare could be halted in cyberspace by a groundbreaking firewall developed at The University of Queensland.

The new [technology](#) is **the only true spam firewall in existence**, according to co-developer Matthew Sullivan.

"Existing anti-spam software filters out spam whereas ours puts up a firewall, stopping all email traffic and only allowing real mail through," said Mr Sullivan.

"In addition, our technology is accurate and fast. We recently completed a successful trial of a key layer of the spam firewall and it processed the emails at 90 messages per second, misclassifying only one out of 25,000 emails."

"It turned out that the software was even better than us, picking up spam we'd incorrectly classified as legitimate emails."

A Specialist Systems Programmer at The University of Queensland, Mr Sullivan worked on the spam firewall concept largely in his spare time, only coming together this year to work on the project with Guy Di Mattina, a recent UQ Engineering honours graduate, and Dr Kevin Gates, a UQ mathematics lecturer.

Pivotal to the trio's spam firewall is the unique method of using a Support Vector Machine (SVM) to categorise emails. The only anti-spam software that analyses emails as a whole picture, rather than based

solely on components such as key words or phrases, said Mr Sullivan.

“Using a SVM, we can train our spam firewall to accurately recognise legitimate emails to the extent that it can tell the difference between a pharmaceutical bulletin on Viagra and someone trying to sell Viagra,” he said.

UQ’s main commercialisation company, UniQuest, has formed a start-up company based on the technology and is seeking investment to take the spam firewall to market.

UniQuest Managing Director, David Henderson said the global cost of spam was estimated by the Radicati Group in 2003 to be \$20.5 billion or \$49 per user mailbox.

“With spam escalating and companies losing valuable employee time to deleting spam, UniQuest hopes to get this revolutionary spam firewall technology on the market quickly but it just depends on the level of funding we receive,” said Mr Henderson.

Source: University of Queensland

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